

Completion of the final stage of the shared path from St Leonards to Port Chalmers

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

APRIL 2016

What are some of the challenges in finishing this section of the path?

The final section of the shared path has some real challenges. We initially hoped we could follow a similar alignment to the previous sections of the path. However, the remaining section of the shared path from St Leonards to Port Chalmers has causeways which are under-width and have historic seawalls, plus a significant section of land reclamation and rail relocation would be required. Solutions identified to manage these are complex and significantly more expensive than sections of the path that have been already completed.

Why has it been necessary to look at more affordable options to complete the final stage of the shared path?

The cost estimate for the scheme designed was well beyond earlier expectations, challenging its affordability and value for money. We are not aiming to bring costs down to original budget. We recognise that to construct the shared path will result in a higher cost and our aim now is to re-establish how the project can be completed in a manner which is both effective and value for money.

Why was the current design put forward as an option if it wasn't affordable?

The initial proposed alignment was publicly consulted on and changes made based on the feedback we received. Like any project, as you progress through to the more detailed design, you get a more accurate idea of cost. Once we realised that the money required to finish this section was prohibitively greater than previously anticipated, we talked with the key stakeholders and the public about this situation and the need to investigate more affordable solutions to ensure the completion of the path.

Where are there likely to be changes to the design?

Options are still being investigated for Blanket Bay, including a new embankment which closely follows the existing highway, or keeping with the rail embankment but with a narrower pathway than originally proposed.

Further geotechnical information is needed for the Roseneath cutting section of the path. It is also likely that we will instead widen and enhance the existing footpath between Sawyers Bay and Port Chalmers in place of the substantial land reclamation required in the previous proposal at Mussel Bay. The widened shared path/footpath has the potential to deliver much greater safety benefits for existing and future path users.

What elements of the current design are likely to remain?

Other than the sections described above, like the previous sections, a lot of the final 5.2km path will be in the rail corridor separated by a chain link fence.

Will the safety and usability of the final section of the path be compromised, if more affordable solutions are used to complete it?

We will provide an alternative and much safer route for pedestrians and cyclists to State Highway 88. The widened and enhanced shared path between Sawyers Bay and Port Chalmers will be safer than the existing footpath.

What consideration is being given to completing the Port Chalmers to Sawyers Bay section of the path to deliver safety benefits sooner to communities in these areas?

We would look to complete this section of the path first once construction gets underway. This path is currently used by school children on a daily basis so any improvements provide a safety benefit to the existing users.

Enhancing the existing path has the added benefit that users from Sawyers Bay travelling to Port Chalmers (and back) will not need to cross the highway, although cyclists or pedestrians beyond Sawyers Bay will need to do so. Two centre refuge islands would be included to make that crossing easier and safer.

Will timelines for the project be affected by not proceeding with the current design?

For the project to progress, the design has to change. This means that the project will be completed later than originally planned, as new project plans have to be prepared and public feedback sought on these. This, plus land purchases and meeting consenting requirements, means construction isn't likely to start until at least 2018.

Once construction has started, the period to build the final leg of the shared path should be shorter due to the removal of the reclamation works.

How important is KiwiRail's role in this project?

KiwiRail's continued support is vital for this project. The completion of the shared path relies on KiwiRail's continued willingness to enable accommodation of sections of the path within their rail corridor.

What opportunities will there be to provide feedback on changes from the current design and when?

There is still investigation required to identify further opportunities for improvements. Once identified, new project plans will be prepared and public feedback sought on these. We expect to be in a position to go out for community feedback nearer the end of this year.



Find out more about this project at

www.nzta.govt.nz/projects/sh88-dunedin-to-port-chalmers-walking-and-cycling-path-project/